



# Doug Duncan Reports

News About Montgomery County, Maryland

February 2005

## The Music Center at Strathmore

Years of hard work and dedication on the part of many in the public and private sectors paid off on February 5 as the new, world-class Music Center at Strathmore opened its doors.

The Music Center will be an incredible asset and a true destination in our region. This integrated center for music and dance will draw not only upon the rich talent in the area, but will provide students with the opportunity to learn from world-class visiting artists.

As a long-time supporter of the arts in Montgomery County, I am gratified that the concentrated efforts of the project team, as well as the County, State and private sector investors, will now begin paying dividends as residents from throughout the Washington metro area come to Montgomery County to enjoy the best in local, national and international entertainment.

The Music Center not only will be the new second home of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, but of a first-class array of established and emerging arts organizations from throughout the area. We're proud to welcome to the Music Center at Strathmore, the Washington Performing Arts Society, National Philharmonic, Maryland Classic Youth Orchestras, CityDance Ensemble and Levine School of Music.

## New Day Laborer Center

In my State-of-the-County speech in December, I announced plans to open a second day-laborer employment center site in the County to help match workers with work. I'm pleased to report that, in conjunction with CASA of Maryland, a center will be opened in Wheaton in the bottom of the Ambassador Apartment building on the corner of University Boulevard and Viers Mill Road.

I'm confident that this center will build on the success of the first such center, located in Langley Park. New immigrants have an entrepreneurial spirit and the thirst to work and be productive members of our community. I'm proud to be able to help them help themselves earn a living and support their families.

We are now in the process of renovating the 1,8900-square foot space that should be ready to open in early spring. The County will lease the space, and CASA will oversee the day-to-day operations.

## New Courts

I was also pleased to announce recently the opening of a special Adult and Juvenile Drug Court designed to handle cases involving drug-addicted offenders by providing intensive supervision, consistent monitoring, treatment, and regular attendance at the court.

The program runs from nine to 18 months, depending on the progress a person makes. Components include intensive involvement of the judge; regular and random drug testing; regular meetings with the case manager and treatment providers; graduated sanctions for negative behavior or failure to comply with conditions of probation. The Drug Court team will meet weekly to review individual treatment plans.

Working with drug-addicted people requires more than simply prison or diversion programs. The drug court offers a problem-solving approach that provides rehabilitation coupled with sanctions and rewards to make drug treatment services more effective.

The group served by the Drug Court is a challenging one, but if these individuals can work toward leading sober and drug- and crime-free lives, the benefit to themselves, their families and the entire community will be enormous.

## Go Montgomery! on the Move

Our Go Montgomery! transportation initiative took another step forward recently with the expansion of Ride On bus service to include weekend service on four routes throughout the county that previously only operated on weekdays. The four routes – in the Bethesda, Twinbrook, Wheaton and Gaithersburg areas – all link to the local Metro stations.

These improvements complement enhancements made last year to ease traffic congestion by expanding transit options.



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## Wind Energy Bill

Following up on our recent agreement to purchase five percent of the County's electricity needs from wind power, I've announced support for legislation just proposed by County Council member George Leventhal that would provide a financial reward for wind energy purchases.

The Clean Energy Rewards Program bill would help us take the next step in encouraging residents and small businesses to also buy clean, renewable energy.

Clean energy programs are our way of helping to ensure a safer environment for future generations, and I'm proud of what we have accomplished, to date, in support of a positive alternative. I commend Councilman Leventhal for his leadership on this vital environmental issue.

## Rockville Library Groundbreaking

Although the weather forced the ceremony indoors, it didn't dampen the enthusiasm for those celebrating the groundbreaking for the new Rockville Library.

The \$26.3 million, three-story building will be located on Beall Avenue at the intersection with Maryland Avenue (extended) in the Town Square section of the new Town Center development.

The first two floors will house the library, while the third floor will house the Montgomery County Public Library administrative offices, the Literacy Council, the County's Human Rights Commission and the department of Technology Services Geographic Information Systems (GIS).

There will be two public meeting rooms and a Friend of the Library bookstore. Also included as part of the building will be 3,500 square feet of retail space, at the corner of Maryland Avenue and Town Square.

When the building is completed, by mid-2006, it will – by its very design – be a local landmark and attraction. In their design, architects Grimm+Parker paid tribute to the mapping of the human genome, one of the most significant historical events ever to happen in Rockville.